

Easter--The Floral Carnival.

Fashions in Flowers and Their Cost--Not Much Simplicity There in These Days.

Easter time is New York's floral carnival. All through the week, at shop and private house, the choice of plant or flower, the decorations for church and home have been the leading feature of thought and conversation, not only in a commercial sense but in those of the aesthetic and sentimental as well.

Fashion bows only to one thing--the symbol. Try as hard as it can, it will never out the favorite Easter lily from its place in the public regard. Enterprising florists, now and then, seek to boom some particular flower, the subject of special care, or one which represents the long-desired novelty, but it is useless: the lily holds its place, unmoved by change and chance, and a walk through the florists' shops shows little diminution in its appreciation.

Tall and straight, with its delicate purity

had had constant calls for the crimson ranunculus, that gorgeous flowering plant that seems a cross in color and design between a rose and a geranium. If the appearance of this establishment is a criterion of this demand, New York houses, on Easter, will exchange their usual colorless decorations for the exotic look of a tropical forest.

In still another place visited it was stated that the demand was for the yellow flowers, particularly the acacia and the genista, which, with their clusters and stalks of gold give the appearance of sudden bursts of sunlight in a room, and even on the dark days, whatever light there may be seems to gather in their petals.

Among the novelties in flowers is the Manila heather, or, as the botanists would say, *Pendula drarites*. This plant, which resembles in shape and height the Scotch

Hotropes; polyanthes, scarlet as a girl's lips; geraniums vivid and vital; masses of arbutus, the New England flower, sign of the departing snow, with its delicate fragrance; armfuls of American Beauties; the stately *Lonea formosa*; Parma violets; yellow and white jonquils from Virginia, make of

design of Roman chariots which in miniature form are one of the attractions in a fashionable shop. These chariots are the exact form in miniature with which the circusgoers are familiar, and she who has participated in one of the box parties may be reminded of the jollity in her Easter offering, receiving a Roman chariot filled

as if the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Ducks ought to be around making inquiries as to the amount of destruction going on amid these fluffy creatures.

Travelling about from shop to shop, in this glory of Easter decoration, one is struck by the fact that nowhere are the feminine finger and fancy apparent. Flower would seem to be one of the materials to which the woman breadwinner would naturally turn, but in no florist establishment is her deft touch apparent. Men are there laboriously tying bows of ribbon, arranging color schemes which make the true artist gasp, so crude are they and so impossible. There is great opportunity for the enterprising woman in this field, and surely every woman is an artist when it comes to the arrangement of flowers and the mingling of colors and tints. The Japanese have recognized the fact that the arrangement of flowers is an art in itself and special courses of training are taken in it. Surely the Oriental would protest against some of the so-called artistic arrangements which spoil the beauty

again they are filled with flowers to be decorated and filled. The practical minded dealer says that the change in fashion in regard to Easter offerings is due to the equally practical mind of the giver who wants a thing to end something more permanent than the cut flower, so long as it is necessary to pay such a high price as the Easter trade demands. Possibly, however, the fashion has other significance, too; it is well to believe it, at any rate.

Surly the complete plant, root, stem and flower, represents the story of Easter and as it has been adopted by the Church, so, in turn, Fashion, ever anxious to seize the spirit as well as the letter, has in turn adopted the flowering plant as its proper offering.

Tissue paper, yards of satin ribbon, pretty holders, cannot hide the true significance of the gift, any more than can Fashion change the custom of giving flowers into anything more material at this season. The woman who receives the gift of flowers at Easter has received something more than the real gift which she sees with her eye; she receives the symbol of affection, ever renewed, of life eternal. Says the poet:

"Emblems of our own great resurrection."

Even the shops where artificial flowers are made are not taking gallery seats just now. The trade in them this week has been very large. These flowers are imported from France and Germany and are wonderful facsimiles of the real article. Even the perfume is simulated by artifice and as a gift is often chosen.

"You would be surprised," said the proprietor of one of these establishments, "at the number of artificial flowers we sell at Easter. She showed a spray of Easter lilies made of tissue and cloth. This spray sells for eighty-five cents and we have already sold hundreds like it."

Little flower pots holding a tiny rose or lily were exhibited and the statement made that a thousand a day were sold in one establishment alone. Many of the florists' churches are patrons of this place and buy the flowers for use at the altars and many of the shrines. Love, they say, is blind and if a young man can convince that an artificial sentiment is real, why can't he convince in regard to a flower. It is recommended that the impecunious try it, at any rate.

If you want to know when the first Easter bouquet was given, you must look in the *Annals of Love*, vol. 1, chap. 1. Those who know say it was a single blossom, and the place was the Garden of Eden, for there was the springtime and love and if there were no Easter in the calendar, there was in the heart.

his queer pony, his attitude of expectancy, half afraid, half expectant, for the springtime was in his veins.

Then, picture his successor, the young man of today, who telephones a florist to send the "last thing" to such and such



A JEWEL CASE OF VIOLETS.

an address, have it done up "smartly, you know, and send the bill to the club. Yes, we are told that simplicity is now the vogue. It will be a long time before we learn how to be simple--even in cowslip time, when hedges sprout."

There is a story told somewhere of a man and a maid, the maid just from the convent, the man, a man of the world who had lived, as the saying is. They were walking together after the Easter service at a fashionable church.

"Do you like it?" he asked, "all that the preacher said?"

"Of course," and she looked shocked.

"That the flowers bloom again, and the



HE BUYS FLOWERS BY THE BUSHEL.

and severe strength, it might be called the Gothic flower, so much does it suggest the pointed arches, the simple lines, the certain spiritual loftiness of design of that architecture. It is the most emblematic of all flowers, and by popular desire holds its rank to-day, as it has for years, the favorite for ecclesiastical use.

The Bermuda lily, which has been a favorite so long, is practically superseded at present by the Holland lily. These names do not imply that the lily is brought direct from either place; it is the bulb that is imported, and the flower is raised in New Jersey, Long Island or on the Hudson, where well-known florists have their establishments. The larger number of the florists now superintend the growth and cultivation of their own products, calling upon wholesale dealers only in time of need to supplement their orders, or to secure some new flower which their own greenhouses do not afford.

For a time the florists tried to bring the Bermuda lily from the fields direct, it was picked in the half-opened bud and reached New York on Saturday, but this scheme did not succeed. The flowers arrived too often in a semi-dilapidated condition, and now the principal Bermuda trade is with private cutomers.

The Holland lily seems to find favor with many importers, owing, it is said, to its greater delicacy of outline, as the Holland tulip still ranks its competitors of other countries. Yet, while the lily still holds first place, there is a diversity of taste in regard to the second flower and fashion for home decoration. Social intercourse is many-sided.

Generally speaking, the scarcity of a flower at this particular time is what gives it value. Violets, roses, lilies of the valley, always favorites with the conservative-minded, are no longer demanded by the ultra "smart set," who demand the unusual in flowers as in everything else. For these the shops afford a carefully selected choice.

According to one of the best-known florists on Broadway, the blue hyacinth, that of the soft dove-like tint, with silvery suggestions, like clouded effects in painting, is the "one and only." Another, equally well known, admitted that he

and American heather, has been cultivated from the plants imported from the Philippines and is only now, after three years, ready for the Easter market. It has a flower somewhat resembling the arbutus, a little larger and a little more delicate in tint, the green having the thorny, spiky appearance of ordinary heather; in beauty is rather in suggestiveness than in reality, an interest attaching to the fact that our new possessions in the Pacific are sending their mite of field and garden for our selection and praise.

The orchid is little popular at this season. In some way, there seems little connection between the holiday which laymen as well as churchmen is celebrating, in appearance if not in spirit, and the flower which reminds one of the abnormal and animal in the vegetable world. A few varieties are seen, notably the cattleya from Brazil, whose purple petals and decorative design appeal to a few--abnormal as the flowers themselves.

Great plants of the flowery spirea tied with broad, white ash ribbons, a rough estimate giving the amount of ribbon to a plant as five yards for a plant three feet high; the bougainvillea, with its indescribable color, a cross between amethyst and he-

and to keep watch on it. This was done. The wives, and sisters and mothers of the laborers brought their meals to them, and they did not leave the place either by night or by day.

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"The architect sought to detain his visitor and stretched his hand out to grab his robe. He awoke with a cry of pain and found that he had clutched a burning log from the camp fire, by which he had been sleeping.

"When the others awoke Manolo told them of his dream, and they, desperate, and glad of any chance that might save their own lives, solemnly swore that they would bury the first woman who reached the camp, be she whoever she might.

"At daybreak they set themselves down to wait, each praying that it might not be his wife who should visit them first. At last a woman's figure was seen in the distance. The architect strained his eyes a moment and then stepped back with a gasp. It was his wife.

"He fell upon his knees and began to pray that a storm might arise. The sky blackened overhead and it did storm. The wind blew and the rain came down in torrents, but the faithful wife, thinking only of her husband, plied steadily on.

"Manolo prayed for lightning. His prayer was again answered. The thunder shook the distant hills and the lightning shattered trees and houses, but still the woman kept on.

"At last she reached the camp and started to prepare her husband's breakfast. He set the men to work and ordered them to leave a hollow in the wall.

"Just step in there and see how it would feel to be buried alive," he said to his wife.

"She laughingly complied. But when the stones had reached the height of her chin she thought came to her that after

the commonplace interior of a ground floor a bewildering maze of perfume and color. One feels as if one had wandered mistakenly into the land where the rainbows are made or where the lost sunsets had taken on another, newer form.

Said a Japanese student once of the Yellowstone cañon. "A million sunsets are dissolved on its walls; they are the colors of all the yesterdays." He might have said it, too, with truth, of one of these Easter floral displays. Surely nothing more gorgeous can be conceived.

As the frame to the picture, so is the flower holder to the flower. In their special

with her particular flower, be it pansy, violet, lily of the valley, or whatever taste or caprice may dictate.

There are sedan chairs, too, for my lady, the top lifting, and, in the interior, from a carefully inserted vase, she may get a whiff of arbutus, or some equally fragrant blossom. These sedan chairs are of delicate tinted satin, with trimmings of facsimiles of those of the historical novels and stage dramas, to which they undoubtedly owe their vogue.

An enterprising florist sends his orders, those of the Brave to the Fair, in little corduroy velvet trunks, with plated gold trimmings, of lock, key, straps, etc., which after the fading of the flowers may be used as jewelry cases. One of these trunks, or boxes as the English cousins call them, may be had filled with flowers, for \$25, while the sedan chair may be bought, according to size of the chair--not the lady--for \$5 or \$10, as to the flower selected.

The Easter bell, indicative either of wedding or church remembrance, is another novelty; this is of violet tinted paper, closely cut so that it looks as if made from the petals of violets and dependent from violet ribbon, makes a pretty ornament over the dinner table. One of the fashionable shops is decorated entirely with these bells, most effectively. For one may buy a bell and it, at least, has the merit of permanence.

Willow, rattan and straw, plaited, twisted and twisted into all sorts and kinds of baskets, boxes and pots are used for the majority of offerings. These baskets, many of them made from special designs sent by the florists to the manufacturers, are begun months ahead in order to be ready for the Easter trade, and thousands of them are made.

The pasteboard boxes have this year reached the climax of appropriateness, many of them depicting on their exterior the particular flower with which they are filled. Great boxes, four and five feet long, for the Easter lily have the white and green of the lilies for decoration. Some of them are covered with blue forget-nots, some with violets, some with roses. Many, however, prefer the unornamented boxes, simply tied with white or colored ribbons.

One of the pleasing novelties, perhaps on account of its simplicity, is the box made from willow, covered with moss, with maiden-hair ferns peeping out from between the twigs. These are filled generally with violets or some small flowers which are not easily forgotten. The unobtrusiveness of the design, the little touch of crude nature is very pleasing as a contrast to the hot-house plants.

Some of these boxes are made in the form of nests and filled with cowslips and other wild flowers, daisies, Solomon's seal and anemones.

One enterprising florist, with this idea as a starting point, has designed a big nest for the Easter breakfast table. The nest is made of twigs with moss interlining and resting on the cowslips a colony of little ducklings peep out with their bright eyes.

Quaint as the conceit is, it almost seems

of many flowers in the shops.

The young man who sends an Easter offering to his fair one needs to have a pocket book well lined. The fashion of sending the cut plant instead of the cut flowers, which is now almost universal, entails added expense, for the simplest potted plant costs \$5 and from that upward the price ranges up to \$50 for a plant two or three feet high in willow basket tied with wide streamers of ribbon. A beautiful spirea in one establishment was listed at \$35, a *Crimson Rambler* at \$30 and a dozen stalks of Holland lilies for \$35.

Many private residences are entirely decorated by the florists for Easter, while many of the fashionable churches on Fifth

avenue put their decorations entirely in the hands of the florists, who send their men there about 11 o'clock on Easter eve and give them instructions to have everything in readiness for the sunrise service. Hundreds of dollars are expended on these residential and church decorations, and nothing is spared of time or material to make a worthy showing.

The florist's place is a noble clearing house during Easter week. Over and over

HE BUYS HER A PAPER ONE.

All down the ages Adams have been given their Eve's Easter flowers--what a picture it would make if we could see them!

"And the Eve?--he bent nearly the youth picked the first rude flower of the season, or perhaps rid d a primitive hot-house and having disarranged his tropics in the form of an awkward, wood n looking bougu t, presented himself at his lady's door with his proposal in his hand. Picture him, if you can, mock at, shy, with

all this might not be a joke. She turned pale with terror and begged to be taken out."

"Yes, yes," said Manolo, but instead of lifting her cut the men heaped on their necks more rapidly until she was completely covered.

"The spell was broken, and after that the work went on without hindrance. When it was completed the Black Prince came to inspect it.

"That is a very fine church," he remarked to the architect. "If you had to do over again I do not suppose you could suggest any changes?"

"Manolo thought of his wife who stood buried in the wall."

"Well," he said sadly, "since you ask me, sire, I do not think I would build it in just the same manner another time."

"Oh," said the king in surprise, "by the way, I wish to get a better idea of the size of that cross. Ascend the scaffolding and look beside it."

"Manolo obeyed. When he had reached the cross, the king, angry that his architect had not designed the finest church in his power, as he thought, ordered the scaffolding cut away.

"Manolo hearing this became terrified and jumped. Where his body struck a cool, clear spring gushed forth, showing that his sin in burying his wife had been atoned for. And that's the story of the King and the Church of Argish."

"The picture which you see is of the restoration which was made in 1889. An odd thing about this restoration is that while they were laboring on it--

"They found the skeleton?" suggested the visitor.

"Oh, if you know so much about it there is no need of my telling you of course."

BAD BOY ON A FARM.

He Makes Experiments With an Incubator and Some Gamecocks.

There is a farmer up in Wretcheter county who wishes that there wasn't any such member of the human family as a nephew who is so bad that he can't be kept in a boarding school and has to be sent to the country to learn how to behave himself. He has just such a nephew stopping with him.

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THE CHURCH OF ARGISH.

Reunited Legend of a Luckless Architect and an Autocratic King.

A visitor, while looking over some pictures in the studio of a Roumanian painter in this city came across the photograph of a beautiful white marble church of Byzantine architecture. He commented upon the oddity of its gracefully twisted towers.

"Yes, it is a very strange church," agreed the artist, "and the way in which it was built, if we are to believe the legend, is still more strange."

"That is the Church of Argish, situated in the valley of the Argish River in the western part of Roumania. It was built in 1519 by King Nagul Basaraba, who, in order to save it from the violent death that had visited several of his predecessors, perhaps, had quite a habit of building churches and monasteries.

"This particular church to modern Christians would seem like an attempt to bribe Providence. Nagul, or the Black Prince, as he was better known, before setting out in the crusades against Turkey, swore that if he were allowed to return unharmed, he would build the finest, not the largest, but the finest--church that possibly could be built.

"The Black Prince did come back safely from his crusade, and, true to his word, he summoned Nagul, his architect, and commanded him to draw up the plans. As soon as this was done Nagul was hired, and the ground was broken at Argish.

"But things did not go smoothly. There seemed to be some evil spell hanging over the work and the laborers could make no progress. Each morning when the men came to work they found the walls which they had built the day before leveled to the ground.

"When the Black Prince asked why the work went so slowly and heard the reason he was angry. He commanded every man to stay at the work both night and day



and to keep watch on it. This was done. The wives, and sisters and mothers of the laborers brought their meals to them, and they did not leave the place either by night or by day.

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